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FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTION IN THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Revised draft agreed conclusions submitted by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, Zakia Amara Bouaziz (Tunisia), on the critical area of concern: education and training of women

1. There is wide consensus that education and training for girls and women, in particular, provides high social and economic returns and is a precondition for the empowerment of women. Education should be aimed at raising and promoting awareness of the rights of women as human rights. Governments, national, regional and international bodies, bilateral and multilateral donors and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, should continue to make special efforts to reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on rural, migrant and refugee women, internally displaced women and women with disabilities, in keeping with the Beijing Platform for Action.

2. Governments and all other actors should make special efforts to achieve the benchmarks set in the Platform for Action of universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children by the year 2000; close the gender gap in primary- and secondary-school education by the year 2005; provide universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015; and consider providing multilateral and bilateral assistance.

3. Governments that have not yet done so should formulate national strategies and action plans for implementation of the Platform for Action which indicate how relevant institutions coordinate action to meet the goals and targets for education. The strategies should be comprehensive, have time-bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring, and include proposals for allocating or reallocating

resources for implementation. [The support of the international community should be enlisted, including additional necessary resources.] [Where necessary, additional funds should be mobilized from private and public institutions, foundations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations to enable girls and women, as well as boys and men, on an equal basis, to complete their education.]

4. Donor Governments should strive to meet the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for overall official development assistance as soon as possible; and interested developed and developing country partners, having agreed on a mutual commitment to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget to basic social programmes, should take into account a gender perspective.

5. Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, addressing, inter alia, unequal access to educational opportunities and inadequate educational opportunities, and taking into account girls and women in especially difficult circumstances. The education, training and lifelong learning of women should be mainstreamed in policies at all levels, in equal opportunity policies and in national human development plans, where they exist. National machinery for the advancement of women and policy makers in Government, employers' organizations, labour unions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should collaborate to ensure that all policies are responsive to gender concerns and that women and their organizations participate in the policy-making process.

6. Integrated policy-making must highlight the interlinkage between education and training policies, on the one hand, and labour market policies, on the other hand, with an emphasis on the employment and employability of women. In order to enhance the employability of women, basic education and vocational qualifications, in particular in the fields of science and technology, are of great importance. In view of the high presence of women in flexible work-time schemes and atypical work, it is particularly important to facilitate women's participation in "on the job training" so that they can secure their jobs and promote their careers.

7. Consciousness should be raised about the need for a new allocation of responsibilities within the family, in order to alleviate the extra burden on women.

8. National statistical offices, responsible governmental ministries, research institutions, women's groups, employers and workers' organizations should provide women, government, policy makers and training providers with the best available labour market information. A redesigned, relevant and up-to-date system of labour market information should provide data disaggregated by sex on training, including employer-sponsored training, present employment trends, income and future employment opportunities.

9. Adult education and training programmes should be developed with a wide focus, incorporating not only literacy and numeracy but also lifelong learning skills and improved capabilities for generating income. Measures should be

taken to remove barriers to the participation of women in adult education programmes, such as setting up care structures for children and other dependents.

10. [Training for women entrepreneurs should be given priority, and support services such as access to capital, credit, savings mechanisms and micro-financing should be made available, to promote the creation of employment which small businesses create.]

11. [The relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of training should be enhanced through the establishment of alliances among the various partners, including the public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, organizations of employers and cooperatives. The State has a major responsibility in promoting and facilitating such alliances by developing the regulatory framework, the financing mechanisms, incentive schemes and technical support. Governments should ultimately be responsible for filling gaps in educational and training provisions, especially for women in poverty, women in rural and depressed areas and women with social, economic, cultural and physical constraints. Employers' and workers' organizations should play a critical role in alliances and should be actively involved in decision-making processes and the provision of training at national and decentralized levels.]

12. Educational planners and policy makers, Governments and other actors should develop programmes in education, technical training and lifelong learning which recognize these components as integral parts on a continuum. This implies that knowledge and skills acquired in formal as well as non-formal, out-of-school education, community activities and traditional knowledge are valued and recognized. The programmes should take a holistic approach, ensuring that women enjoy equality throughout the process in a new learning culture involving individuals, enterprises, organizations and society at large.

13. Educational planners and policy makers should given renewed importance to education in mathematics, science and technology for girls and women. In order to develop the skills required, women need to have full access to education in science and technology at all levels, including the use of modern technologies such as information technology, to vocational training and to lifelong learning. Using a wide range of strategies and modalities, efforts should be made - for instance, through the development of information services and professional guidance for girls and women - to promote girls' and women's participation in fields where they are underrepresented, such as science, engineering and technology, and to encourage them to participate actively in the development of new technologies, from design to application, monitoring and evaluation.

14. The development of gender-sensitive teaching materials, classroom practices and curricula and of awareness-raising and regular gender training for teachers is a prerequisite for breaking down gender stereotypes and developing non-discriminatory education and training aimed at the physical and intellectual development of girls and boys.

15. The recruitment, training, working conditions and the status of teachers, in particular, of women teachers, must be improved, and gender-sensitive training for teachers, teacher trainers, school administrators and planners must

be developed. Positive action programmes should be stimulated in order to overcome the underrepresentation of women in educational management.

16. The use of instruments available to ensure equality in education and training should be promoted - instruments such as research, information campaigns, refresher courses for teachers, development of gender-sensitive teaching materials, positive action measures and gender impact assessments. They focus on a variety of actors: girls and boys, parents, teachers, school administrators and policy makers.

17. Teacher training is an essential component in the transmittal of gender-sensitive programmes for eliminating the differential behavioural expectations of girls and boys which reinforce the gender division of labour. Techniques for improving teachers' capabilities to deliver gender-sensitive instruction need to be researched and widely disseminated in order to support the development of multicultural, gender-sensitive curricula in all areas of instruction.

18. Governments should provide increased access to non-discriminatory education and training and create safe, enabling environments in order to retain girls and women in schools and eliminate gender disparities in school attendance at all levels of education, including the higher levels. All actors should join efforts by providing school feeding programmes, transport and boarding schools, when necessary. The contribution of non-governmental organizations to all fields of education and, in particular, to lifelong learning is of importance.

19. Safety in schools and during extracurricular activities should be promoted by school authorities, parents and administrative personnel.

20. [The United Nations system should compile best practices or strategies for retaining girls in the educational system through secondary school and should provide opportunities for lifelong education relevant to shifting employment opportunities and social change.]

21. [The Secretary-General should continue to analyse and widely disseminate to Governments and non-governmental organizations, through Women 2000 and other publications, in the official United Nations languages, information on the education and training of women, as part of the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and in mainstreaming a gender perspective.]